



June 3, 2019

**DOWNTOWN VISIONING SUMMIT #2**

**City of Maple Valley Downtown Visioning Study**

*See also the meeting presentation file, "2019\_06-03 Summit2\_lowres.pdf."*

**Recap of Summit #1**

- Wall posters and presentation file provide summary comment about the previous discussion and image card sort comments.
- Meeting minutes available on each table.

**Review of Homework**

- Maple Valley town center, central business and legacy zoned site area presented, with population and area noted as background information for homework discussion.
- 10 unique mapping ideas were submitted in response to the question, "Draw an area on the map where you think this kind of 'downtown' environment should occur in Maple Valley."
  - Most input suggested the town center was a smaller area within the zoning designation.
  - Several delineations overlapped [as shown].
  - Discussion of 'why' the area was identified. Did it correlate with the uses proposed? NBBJ did not assume there was necessarily a direct correlation.
    - One person volunteered that he had picked the southwest triangle area (SE Kent Kangley Road – Access Road) because the high school is already an area of great pedestrian activity and building downtown uses nearby might generate more energy.
    - Another person identified they selected the Legacy site as an undeveloped opportunity, compared to the majority of the town center designated area.
- 25+ favorite downtowns were submitted in response to the question, "Name two downtown (town center) areas outside of Maple Valley that you enjoy and reasons why." In addition, NBBJ added a few examples to the list for comparison.
  - Pink dashed lines identified the approximate downtown/town center area and the pink colored areas highlighted the concentration –or center- of the downtown.
  - Downtowns come in many shapes and sizes. Diagrams shared indicated the more typical relationships of 'downtown' to arterials and major cross streets.
- Downtown examples presented for information purposes and/or opportunity for further research
  - Presence of civic buildings to downtown?
  - Residential uses located in downtown?
  - Enumclaw may have been the most common response. Like Pullman, it was noted that streets were occasionally shut down for events. (This can occur when other adjacent streets are available to connect traffic during temporary vacations.)

- Discussion of “urban village” as an intentional development of a town center environment with a mix of uses. Barkley Village in Bellingham was presented as an example of a newer ‘town center’ with retail/restaurant, entertainment and office uses but more limited residential uses, so far (still in development).
- Learn how events (and street vacations) impact the city center?

### Vision Statements

- Town Center vision statement in the Comprehensive Plan still works with the Summit #1 conversation, as an aspiration. Maple Valley has not yet achieved the stated goals.  
*The Town Center designation provides for the evolution of a walkable, attractive, and economically vibrant mixed-use center (commercial, residential, and civic uses) in the heart of the City. The Town Center consists of two contiguous subareas – Town Center North and Town Center South.*
- Each table was asked to discuss one key adjective [from above vision statement] to define what it is and what it would take to achieve it.
- **walkable**
  - Means safe & inviting
  - Needs a ‘draw’ or reason to walk there, that they can’t drive to now
  - Needs to pencil out for store owners
  - support parking discipline – park once and walk between destinations; encourage zero lot lines to create building proximity and density?
    - Example: University Village, Seattle – you only park once and walk (can’t get a second spot); encourages shopping
  - Consider ‘road diet’ to create closeness; focus on parking more than through traffic; create plazas and open space
  - Bring buildings to the street [zero lot lines]
  - 4 Corners to Legacy site entry is less than a mile long, but it feels longer. How do you create reason to walk?
  - There are sidewalks in Town Center South, but not yet in Town Center North. Need sidewalks for walkability.
  - Need to add “shall” into the descriptions. Comp Plan describes walkable but it doesn’t exist yet. [Concern in prior years that too many requirements would scare off development, especially during economic recession.]
  - Compact development is walkable
  - No chain retail – need reason to walk here, versus anywhere else
  - Consider providing trolleys, golf carts or people movers? Example: Scottsdale, AZ
  - Example downtowns have existing streets but many areas of Maple Valley Town Center do not (yet)
  - Need to insulate pedestrians from loud noise and speed of adjacent traffic to encourage walking
  - Existing trail is built pedestrian infrastructure. Use it as an asset and starting point to launch downtown.
  - Walkable is a paradigm shift for Maple Valley. Will need to create a culture of walking and not driving from point to point.

- High school is a genesis for events. Consider it as a starting point for more walkable environment.
- **attractive**
  - Means “charming”
  - Like the aesthetics of brick buildings, historic structures
  - Like the similar/continuity aesthetic of same architect or architectural style (seen in many example downtown photos)
  - Incorporate public art
  - Include trees, landscape and open space
  - Embrace the rainy weather: include interactive water features, example: rain drums
  - Discourage paintings/murals that are effectively signage but not subject to signage requirements or limitations; recent brand example in town discussed.
  - Big box retail identified as example of *not attractive* – desire for difference and uniqueness in Maple valley. Concern about impact on small businesses (both bad and good described).
    - Big box can work as larger anchors that support smaller businesses
    - Represent significant employment (are there wage differences?)
    - Considered ‘okay’ outside or on the edge of town center, but should not be located in downtown
- **economically vibrant**
  - Means citywide economic vitality, not just downtown. Don’t want to detract from elsewhere in the city.
    - When Fred Meyer opened, it impacted other businesses (negatively or positively)
    - Have to consider north and south Maple Valley
    - There are trade-offs to be considered
  - Business owners have to be able to pay the rent... need to either add more residents or more employees (daytime) to increase the population to support economic vitality
  - Boutique businesses have to be able to pencil too and new development is very expensive.
  - Needs to be additive, not subtractive. Add to what is already here.
  - What is Maple Valley’s brand? Who do we want to be?
- **mixed-use**
  - Means different things – retail with residential, retail with office, retail with residential and office. Does this definition vary in different areas of Town Center?
  - Big box stores versus small business
  - Chains or name brands versus small/local business
    - Chains may be able more able to commit financially? Long-term stability?

- Mixed-use can create walkable, density
- Parking structure costs are very high. Development needs to pencil or it won't happen. Need to mitigate risk.
- Example: Mill Creek built the residential first to create density for retail/restaurants to succeed
- Need to look at what Maple Valley does not already have and put that in place, not more of the same.
  - Example: civic center?
  - Location: legacy site?
- Retail is precarious right now. Need to focus on other uses:
  - Entertainment?
  - Indoor recreation?
  - Convention space?
- Need to attract jobs in the downtown core! People like to live and work in the same area.
- **center**
  - Means a sense of place
  - Mixed-use
  - Identify amenities (more than retail) that isn't currently located/available in Maple Valley and develop those
  - Uniqueness

#### **Toolkit Discussion**

- Potential tools for implementation and case studies were shared.
- Complete critical review of current standards & guidelines to determine if the intent achieves the result. Can a landowner/developer/designer meet the intent but not achieve the vision?
  - Zoning Code
  - Design Guidelines
  - Comprehensive Plan
- Develop a framework plan (or "master plan") that provides a flexible design that attracts developer interest and yet allows development to be market-responsive. (Example: Lake Forest Park is currently planning their town center. Talk to colleagues at that city to understand budget, timing and lessons learned.)
  - Building siting, approximate footprints, height, massing & scale
  - Street grid
  - Open space
  - Land use
  - Density
  - Phasing
- Partner with private sector to achieve development to either market Downtown vision to current landowners or Public-Private Partnership opportunities on Legacy

- Site. (Example: Port of Vancouver is working with developers to build the master plan NBBJ designed for 10-acres on the riverfront.)
  - long-term ground lease
  - infrastructure development
  - environmental review, “development ready”
  - lease commitment
  - Developer Agreement

No public comment.  
End meeting.